

S19.2.T67

Doc. Egan ✓

trade & technical skills in the peace corps

UNIV. OF FL. LIB.
DOCUMENTS DEPT.



DEPOSITORY





VOLUNTEERS WITH TRADE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

In Sierra Leone, on the west coast of Africa, every construction project has a meaning all its own — like the new dirt road into the small rural town of Rogbin.

Before two Peace Corps Volunteers with technical know-how helped to plan and organize road construction at Rogbin, the local farmers were planting only half their fields, even though the community was poor and hungry.

The farmers didn't plant any more because most of their crops of bananas, rice, cassava, palm kernels, palm oil, oranges, coconuts, pineapples and peanuts rotted before they could be taken to market.

Before the Peace Corps project began, families struggled through the high grass and across treacherous streams carrying heavy loads of produce to meet the market truck two miles away. The trek was impossible during the rainy season, and they would sometimes be isolated for as long as six weeks.



But life in Rogbin is better now.

Two miles of roadway have made a big difference in the progress and prosperity of the town, and the people there are now planning to build a school, with the advice and assistance of Peace Corps Volunteers. This is the kind of help which people with technical know-how can give.

But it isn't always easy for a Volunteer to make clear to his hosts just who he is and why he came.

Roger Hord, a Volunteer journeyman bricklayer with several years of experience in Portland, Ore., learned this the hard way during his two-year tour of duty in Pakistan.

Overseeing a new brick-making project which he had launched, Hord worked frantically from dawn to dark, driving 75 to 150 miles a day on his motorcycle over bad roads to visit 31 brick-making sites. He was teaching brick-making and construction in a Peace Corps vocational education project and supervising the production of four million bricks to build badly needed schools, houses and clinics.

One can imagine Hord's shock and dismay when a Pakistani co-worker asked, "Is this the way you make brick at your home in Japan?"

But this was at the beginning.

By the time Hord finished his job, the people with whom he worked knew very well where he came from and why he was there.

Former Pakistani co-workers would walk five or six miles after Hord had moved on to another construction site to see how he was getting along and to talk with him about their problems.

"Many times I couldn't eat at home because I was so full; as I went down the road, men I had worked with came out of their homes and insisted I come in for food — eggs and tea or eggs and green coconut. These men were working for 40 cents a day, and an egg costs two cents — they could not afford to feed me, but they insisted I come."

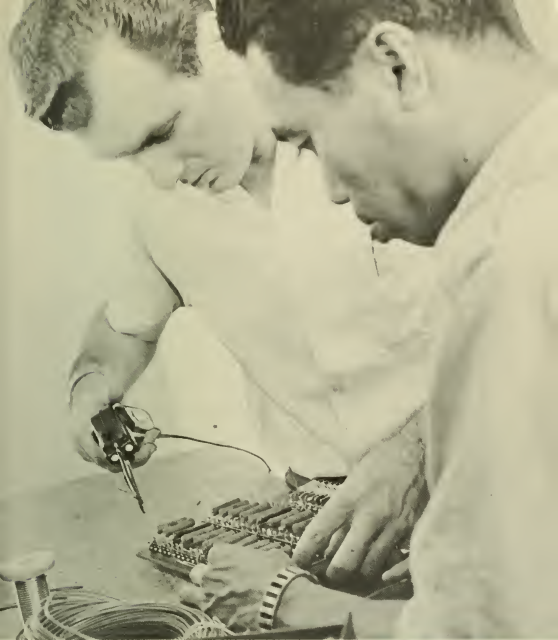
And when Hord left Pakistan, a man he had seen only a few times in a small tea shop — they didn't even know each other's names — came to see him off. He brought a festive lei to put around the Volunteer's neck.

"Thank you for helping my people," was the anonymous friend's farewell.

Other Volunteers with technical know-how, who have not had Hord's training and experience, are also making valuable contributions. In Gabon, for instance, teams of Volunteers are building vitally needed schools. Several of these Volunteers are experienced building tradesmen. However, most of them had little or no experience other than basement carpentry. The Peace Corps trained these people in the skills they would need overseas.

In Mirpur, a suburb of Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan, Peace Corps Volunteers have been doing the kind of job which demonstrates still other contributions to be made to developing nations by persons with trade and technical skills.

There, major efforts are under way to resettle



almost 400,000 refugees who arrived fifteen years ago and still live in shanties. To provide decent, modern housing for these people, large-scale construction techniques are employed, requiring the use of heavy machines such as bulldozers, scrapers, graders and trucks. This is where Volunteer mechanics Bob Ahlers of Oceanside, N. Y., and Bob George of Stony Creek, Conn., were able to help out. They set up maintenance centers for this heavy machinery and showed their Pakistani co-workers how to get the job done.

Ahlers and George felt that their most important contributions were in the field of teaching preventive maintenance. They repaired breakdowns, of course, but their prime goal was to prevent them. They introduced regular schedules for lubrication and inspection to catch small defects early. In the past, a machine in Pakistan was run until it stopped and then just abandoned or occasionally given a costly major overhaul job.

The Volunteers found that their work was complicated even further because the manuals which came with the equipment were very technical and printed in English. Ahlers and George tried to simplify them so they could be translated into

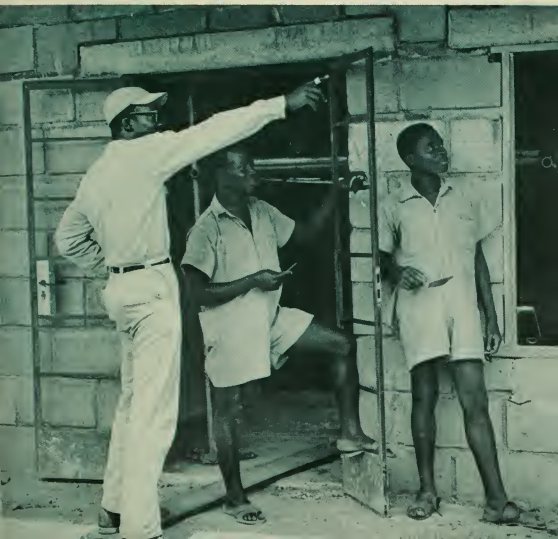


basic Bengali, enabling at least some of their Pakistani vocational students to read and understand them.

Getting technical information across was not their only problem, however. Pride often entered the picture. Ahlers remembers one man in particular who refused to adopt the new methods he was being taught until he was transferred. Then, on his new assignment, he used Ahlers' methods as his own.

As far as Ahlers is concerned, it was "mission accomplished," because that is what Peace Corps Volunteers with trade and technical skills in many fields are trying to do — create pools of technically trained local manpower who can carry on when the Volunteers depart. These people who are trained by the Volunteers can, in turn, lay the groundwork for bringing modern technology to their respective lands. Although Ahlers and George had formal training, most Volunteer mechanics had little experience outside of working on their own cars. These Volunteers received technical training from the Peace Corps which prepared them for their overseas work.

Most Peace Corps host countries suffer from



acute shortages of people with technical know-how — the very thing which trade and technical Volunteers have to offer. These shortages prevent developing nations from making progress in improving their standards of living. As a result, requests are pouring in for Peace Corps Volunteers with these skills. Nearly every skill and craft used in the American economy is represented in the vocational education programs now sponsored by the Peace Corps in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

You can help the Peace Corps fill these requests for trained manpower and, at the same time, broaden your own horizons. In the Peace Corps, you will have a chance to learn a new language, to travel and to become acquainted with a foreign culture.

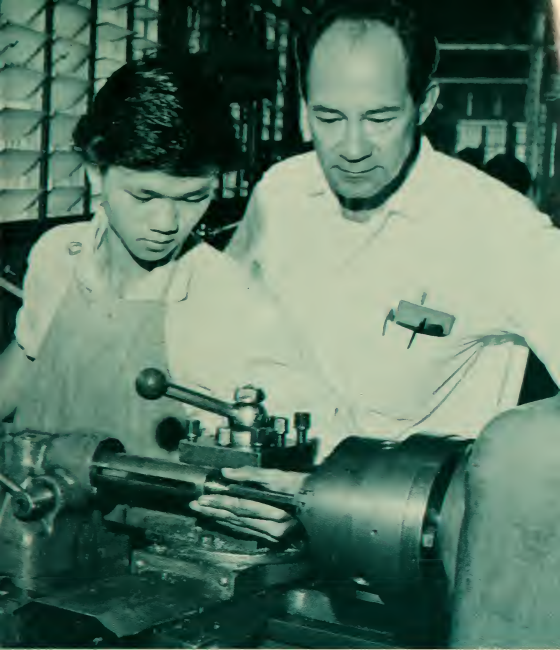
And you really don't know how much you are capable of until you pit your skills and ingenuity against the kind of challenges the Peace Corps offers.

Apprentice plumber Neil Van Dyke of Chicago, Ill., found that his Peace Corps experience gave him much more responsibility than he would have been allowed to shoulder for many years working in his trade in the United States. In the "boom" town of Chimbote, Peru, Van Dyke was asked to design and supervise the installation of the entire plumbing and heating system for a new school — quite an assignment for an apprentice!

Or take the case of Frank Brechin, mechanic. When Brechin was retreading tires and repairing cars in his home town of Grand Rapids, Mich., he never dreamed he'd be making use of these skills in the mountains of Afghanistan for the cause of world peace and understanding.

But it would be difficult to find a more critically strategic area in the world than this country where Brechin is helping to maintain trucks and buses whose usefulness had been severely limited because not enough Afghans had the technical training to keep them running efficiently.

"I want to help these people free themselves



from the soil and direct their energies to industrialization," Brechin wrote.

"Maybe if we can help to close the big gap between the development of nations, the world will be in a better position to talk peace."

There are many additional reasons why people with technical know-how volunteer for Peace Corps service. New skills, knowledge of a foreign language, experience of living in another culture — all these things make the returned Volunteer a valuable addition to American industry which is thinking more and more in terms of overseas operation. Foreign businesses also have a never-ceasing need for skilled manpower.

Opportunities like these are awaiting Volunteers with trade and technical skills in 46 Peace Corps countries around the world. These countries are calling for machinists, sheet metal workers, welders, blacksmiths, tool and die makers, metallurgists, printers, boilermakers and foundry workers.



They also are asking for carpenters, surveyors, refrigeration experts, painters, plumbers, pipe-fitters, plasterers, roofers, stonemasons, cement finishers, woodworkers, bricklayers, operating engineers and electricians to teach their trade and to demonstrate their skills on the job in hundreds of construction projects.

Maybe you have never taught in your life. Don't worry. This kind of teaching is mainly by example. A person with technical abilities will have no trouble showing how things are done. And your Peace Corps training will help by giving you pointers on how to get your message across.

Preparations for overseas service are thorough. Volunteers receive intensive classroom and laboratory work in the language of the country where they are assigned. Language training is given by the most modern, concentrated methods designed to have the students thinking in the new language, as well as speaking it, by the time they finish the course.





Peace Corps training will tell you about the country where you are going; it also includes a general survey of international affairs and refresher courses in American history and institutions.

In order to be eligible for the Peace Corps, applicants must be American citizens at least 18 years old. Married couples may serve if both qualify for the same project (not necessarily the same job), and if they have no dependents under 18.

In addition to the \$75 (less taxes) per month readjustment allowance put aside for them by the Peace Corps, Volunteers receive living allowances to cover the cost of food, housing, transportation, appropriate clothing and miscellaneous expenses. Disability benefits and medical care are provided by the Peace Corps. Volunteers receive 45 days leave with allowances during their two years of service.

Military obligations are not met through Peace Corps service, but Volunteers can be deferred from their Selective Service and Reserve obligations for the period of their Peace Corps service at the discretion of local Selective Service Boards.

Persons with trade and technical skills who think they may be interested in joining the Peace Corps should write the Office of Public Affairs, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND AN APPLICATION
WRITE:

PEACE CORPS

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20525

Attn: Office of Public Affairs
